Foreword

There is a critical need for teachers who can incorporate technology to enhance learning in order to make students active learners. However, research reports stress that, despite the increasing number of computers and other technologies, the actual use of computer and other technologies in the classroom is not “extensive nor appropriate” (Mojkowski, 1990). This dilemma is reflected in the foreign language classroom where teachers complain that access to existing and emerging technologies is not readily available to them and their students.

The Computer/Technology Skills Standard Course of Study states that “to become technologically proficient, students must develop the skills over time, through integrated activities in all content areas K-12, rather than through one specific course. These skills are necessary for all students and should be introduced and refined collaboratively by all K-12 teachers as an integral part of the learning process” (p. 9).

For these reasons, this publication is designed to examine the more traditional technologies such as videotapes, audiocassettes, and word processing as well as the different technologies including CD-ROMS, presentation-enhancing tools, multimedia programs, Internet, on-line forums, and satellite programs which are available to foreign language teachers. Technology: The Common Language suggests practical foreign language activities for teachers who wish to increase their students’ interest and motivation and who want to enhance their students’ language skills and cultural understanding through the use of technology. This document offers a multitude of foreign language sample lessons organized around the computer and technology strands (Societal Issues, Databases, Spreadsheet, Keyboard Utilization/Word Processing/Desktop Publishing, Multimedia Presentation, and Telecommunications). This document further offers definitions, answers to frequently asked questions, strategies for understanding authentic materials, and it lists a variety of resources.